

# the **Gazetta**



**A Historic Gathering of Widows**

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# ENCOURAGEMENT

## Encouragement and Hope

A WORD FROM THE CEO

As we put together the contents of this Fall Gazette, I was drawn to some interesting passages in the Bible. One of those passages was Romans 1:11-12 where the Apostle Paul writes an intriguing statement at the beginning of his letter to the Romans.



**“I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong—that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith.”**

– ROMANS 1:11-12 NIV

How could the Apostle be encouraged by speaking to the Christians in Rome?

The answer lies in the relationship Paul had with those believers in Rome and elsewhere. Whenever there was teaching in the house gatherings and churches, there was also a time of testifying by those in attendance. They shared with each other the many ways God was blessing them and how Jesus was Lord. It’s a nuance we have lost in most of our western models of church worship services.

In hearing from others about how God is working, we too receive encouragement and blessing when someone else is being blessed. This is how we cry with those who cry and rejoice with those who

# MENT AND HOPE

rejoice because they are sharing their story of what life is like and how God is in the details. We see a snapshot of their life and faith, and somehow the Holy Spirit uses it to increase our own faith life. We may even privately challenge ourselves, “if God could do that in their life, maybe He can do that in my life too.”

During this prolonged and unpredictable pandemic of 2020, we have worked to find ways to encourage our sisters and brothers in Ukraine. Inside this Gazette, you are going to read some of the ministry taking place as a result of your partnership with us through prayer and financial support to bless the women, men, and young people in Ukraine.

You are going to read and hear some of the amazing responses of thanks and gratitude of those efforts from some of our widows and pensioners. I was amazed at how humbled and energized I felt when I read and heard these notes of gratitude. You can see more of them on our webpage at [musicmissionkiev.org](http://musicmissionkiev.org) or on our Music Mission Kiev Facebook page at [facebook.com/musicmissionkiev](https://facebook.com/musicmissionkiev).

**I hope and pray your hearts are encouraged as you read this Gazette. God is at work in Ukraine and because of you, we are continuing to proclaim the Gospel.**

Grace and Peace,



Greg

# WIDOWS

## A Historic Gathering of Widows

WIDOWS MEET TOGETHER AGAIN FOR BIBLE LESSONS



We call it “historic” because it happened after a very long break. This was our first full Bible lesson after the strict quarantine. HOORAY! We divided the widows into two groups. One group came on Thursday, August 6 and the other group joined us on Thursday, August 13. The lesson went well and was harmonious.

At the entrance to the hall, Vika took everyone’s temperature, Sasha sanitized hands, and Igor helped to seat people. Valentyna stayed at her post, took attendance, and distributed food cards after the lesson. People were understanding of the new rules and kept social distancing and all participants were wearing masks. The general atmosphere was unusual to see, but we were grateful to God for the chance to meet all together again!

At the beginning of the lesson, Vika expressed words of gratitude to everyone for their patience and understanding. Serhiy B. also greeted them briefly. He began by reminding them that in the middle of March we agreed to meet again on April 9. We made some firm plans, but our “firm plans” were thwarted, and there was nothing we could do about it. What we could and should do is turn to God and His Word for encouragement and guidance. We did just that and immediately turned to 1 Thessalonians 5.

*“Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”*

Serhiy challenged them to pattern their lives after those verses. He went on to share the ways he has been thankful to God for protecting us throughout the quarantine—and now for allowing us to gather again. He also conveyed his thanksgiving for our American brothers and sisters who, in spite of a difficult situation in the U.S., have continued to support our widows faithfully.

Serhiy closed by drawing their attention to a verse from The Lord's Prayer, "Give us today our daily bread", and encouraged them to be grateful for what they get today, and not be anxious about the future. The Lord will take good care of them. Together, they all stood up and recited The Lord's Prayer. Looking around the room, we could tell they missed each other and their fellowship!

Doctor Vadym shared information about the virus and its current condition in Kyiv. He encouraged people and invited some of them to appointments after the Bible lesson.

Iryna D. was leading the Bible lesson about how the Lord is our help. Our widows really needed this—she touched on the quarantine topic and the topic of our comfort. When we read Psalm 121, she told them that our help comes from the Lord! Some of the people had tears in their eyes and Iryna herself almost cried as she felt the overwhelming gratitude to God for the opportunity to serve the elderly, who are physically weak and, unfortunately, some are also spiritually weak.

At the end, we prayed to God together and thanked Him for His assistance and we asked for forgiveness in times when we don't appreciate His help. We asked for His assistance and we prayed for those who are faithful in serving MMK parishioners.

After the lesson, everyone was dismissed slowly by row and received food cards. Iryna had the pleasure of talking to those who were still in the hall and she read a poem to them. Some people, wiping their tears, just came up to the stage and spoke on the microphone about how grateful they are to God and our Mission for taking care of them! We could finally talk to each other without hurry.

Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord! All the glory and praise to God!

# ENCOURAGE

## Donors Encourage Widows

ROGER & BETH RYMER SEND VIDEO GREETING TO WIDOWS



Recently one of our donors and widow sponsors, Roger and Beth Rymer, recorded a video greeting for our widows in Ukraine. This video was very moving and emotional. Beth began by telling the widows how much they were missed and encouraged them to trust in God, even amidst the difficult circumstances right now. Roger shared how COVID-19 has been affecting him and Beth—sometimes they're bored, fearful, and depressed. He encouraged them by sharing something they've learned through this: they have had more time to get closer to the Lord. He reminded the widows that they're not alone—God is with them. Roger challenged them to sit down with their Bibles and draw close to God. He closed by saying, "Slava Bohu"... which means ... "Praise God!"

We played this video at our widows' gatherings in August and it had an incredible impact on our widows. Several of them were compelled to send a video response back to the Rymers thanking them for their care and concern.



**GALYNA**

Dear Roger and Beth, I'm very happy to realize that there are such people as you who live in this world. I'm happy to get to know you and to learn from your to love God! You taught me to love you and to live with you! I have a great desire to see you again. Please, come and visit us.

I would like to wish you good health, so you would never get sick and you would be able to stay with

us! It's me, Galyna. I'm sincerely grateful to you for everything!

Dear Roger and Beth, my name is Lubov and I am a person you sponsor.

A miracle happened to me today! Many widows saw their sponsors at least once. Not so long ago I learned that you are the people who support me and I asked God for the chance to see you. My vision is bad because I have problems with my eyes.



**LUBOV**

Today, when I came to the Bible study, the screen was turned on and I saw you. I could see who you are! I cried like a little child... Thank you for everything! I prayed for God to strengthen you and all of us so we can be part of the Mission for as long as we can. I also prayed that we will be able to see each other and to take care of each other. I'm very grateful to you for everything! Goodbye!



**OLENA**

My name is Olena. I'm happy to see you on the video greeting you sent to us! Glory to God! I just knew that there are people somewhere far away who may still remember me. Thank you to God for how He created music. Thanks to the music performed by the KSOC—that's how I came to the Mission and to St. Paul's Church. I discovered so many things here besides the music. I received so much joy and help. The

Mission also helped treat my daughter's illness. Thank you! I have two grown sons too.

I am grateful to you! May God bless you with good health! All the best to you!

**Read more about our widows  
on our website.**

[MUSICMISSIONKIEV.ORG/BLOG](https://MUSICMISSIONKIEV.ORG/BLOG)





# Visit with Alla

IRINA D. & SASHA A. VISIT HOMEBOUND WIDOW ALLA Y.



We knew that Alla could barely walk, so we were quite surprised when Alla opened the door to greet us.

She lives in a one-room apartment that she received from the Ministry of Culture. Alla has no husband and no children, only a cat that keeps her company. Alla told us a lot about her cat. She found it, started to feed it, and later decided to take it home. She also added that we should pray for her to have a long life so she can continue to take care of the cat.

Alla is 96 years old and has been with our mission from the very beginning. She was a concertmaster in the National Opera. She shared so many memories with us—including one story about when she was a guest of Fidel Castro. Alla was 80 years old when she last performed and became a retired pensioner.

She told us that her health is not good and she doesn't have much time left to live. We began to speak with Alla about eternity and faith in God, and we read Psalm 121. She said she did not always understand God's ways, and wonders why He permits wars. Alla remarked, why didn't He stop Hitler, even though many people were praying? We spoke a lot about faith and trusting God even when we don't understand everything. We also prayed, asked for God's forgiveness, and glorified Him.

Alla was very grateful for the visit and our care for her—we are a great support for a lonely woman like Alla. She said that all of us (the Mission) are God's people. Glory to God!

# IDP Bible Lessons Resume

GROUP MET IN AUGUST—THE FIRST TIME SINCE MARCH



We are glad we've been able to resume our regular Bible lessons for the internally displaced people. The strict quarantine has interrupted our lessons, but this group has been meeting to study the Word of God since 2014.

Currently, IDPs meet with Pastor Ruslan at a park in Puscha where they live. Pastor Ruslan has launched a new series of lessons on 1 Thessalonians. After the lesson, he makes himself available for those who want to talk to him privately or pray with him.

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## Save the date!

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 1

**GIVINGTUESDAY**

Some of you may remember GivingTuesdayNow back in May when we raised money to pay the KSOC for the two months they were out of work. Typically GivingTuesday only happens once per year on the Tuesday following Thanksgiving, Black Friday & Cyber Monday, but GivingTuesdayNow was added earlier this year as an emergency response to COVID-19.

With that said, GivingTuesday will be here before we know it! GivingTuesday is a global generosity movement unleashing the power of people and organizations to transform their communities and the world.

So mark your calendars for Tuesday, December 1. We'll join together on this day to raise money for our widows' medical needs. More details coming soon—check our Facebook page or website for updates.

# Parting Word



Our Board of Directors recently finished our fall meeting. Although we were restricted to a two-day board meeting via Zoom, we worked steadily and accomplished much. One of the best parts of our discussions was the growing evangelism and discipleship we are seeing in our Widow's Ministry. The leadership of Pastor Ruslan has been the perfect addition to our team.

We discussed our strategic plan for the next five years, budget, annual audit review process, updates on the status of our mission over the last six month's restrictions, and our plans for the next phases of ministry that God is calling us to accomplish. So much is going perfectly in terms of our governance, financial oversight, compliance with the law, transparency in all we do, and accountable stewardship of gifts, but our financial support has declined substantially. Our donations have dropped 28% compared to this time last year. We recognize the financial strain COVID-19 has had on all of us, but we are continuing to live and operate by faith.

Our mission has always been focused on making disciples for Jesus Christ. If you have been keeping up with us on Facebook and the stories in this Gazette, you know people like Tetyani K., Larisa B., and Mariia M. are but a few of the living testimonies of how God is working through Music Mission Kiev.

Please take a moment to pray for us and all the opportunities we have in Ukraine. Would you also consider sending in a gift to keep our mission on track and maintain the momentum of reaching Ukraine for Jesus Christ? As the people of Ukraine continue to discover their national identity, our desire is for Jesus Christ to be a growing part of their identity. Through your prayers and financial support, God touches our sisters and brothers in Ukraine. Please keep praying—we need you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg".

Greg



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PRAYERS AND SUPPORT!**

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is a member of the

